

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5781

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 29341

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR FR AO

SUBJECT: LAGGING FRENCH-ANGOLAN RELATIONS

1. ACCORDING TO QUAI AFRICAN AFFAIRS OFFICER JEAN-PIERRE CHAUVET, THE FRENCH THOUGHT THEY HAD DETECTED SIGNS THAT THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND CONSEQUENTLY, SENT HIM TO LUANDA ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO TO NEGOTIATE THE OPENING OF RELATIONS. BUT THE ANGOLANS' REACTION TO THE FRENCH SALE OF NUCLEAR REACTORS TO SOUTH AFRICA PROVED TO BE VERY STRONG AND THEY REFUSED TO CONSIDER THE MATTER. CHAUVET DOUBTS THAT THE QUESTION WILL BE RAISED AGAIN BEFORE SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR HAVE ELAPSED. THE FRENCH VICE CONSUL IN LUANDA, WHO HAS NO STATUS WITH THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT, WILL LEAVE IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS, CHAUVET SAID, SUGGESTING THAT THE INITIATIVE WAS FRENCH BUT LEAVING OPEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ANGOLANS FINALLY MIGHT HAVE FORCED THE FRENCH TO ACT.

2. COMMENT: SUSPICION THAT THE FRENCH ARE STILL BACK-ING UNITA (WHICH THE QUAI DENIES) MAY ALSO HELP TO EXPLAIN WHY ANGOLA, AT A MOMENT WHEN IT IS OPENING RELATIONS WITH OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, CONTINUES TO REBUFF FRENCH OVERTURES.

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